**GRAMMAR MINI\_LESSON: The COLON**

By Heather Anderson

**Grammar Rule:** **The Colon is...a Connector, an Orator, a Lister, an Opener, Not Just a Timeteller!**

**Grade Level Targeted:** Grade 11

ENG3E , ENG3C and ENG3U: Writing – Using Knowledge of Form and Style (Sentence Craft and Fluency 2.4 )

**Rationale:** Knowing how to properly use colons will help students give better flow to their writing style by combining and connecting sentences well, introducing longer quotes and lists correctly, and properly beginning a business letter.

**Activity:**

Bring in something for the students to taste that you consider part of your cultural identity. As the treat is being passed around write down on the board the culture you have represented and other cultures that you identify with. Explain your connection and begin asking students to add to your list. Change the list by writing, *The cultural and linguistic identities in our class include the following: ---------* . Ask what the name of the punctuation mark was that you added. Ask what the students already learned about the colon’s function from Punctuation takes a Vacation by Robin Pulver. Tell them that colons are not just time tellers. Write this on the board and ask them to make up the rule for how you have used the colon.

Write, RULE 1 (or ask a student to play teacher and write for you). Ask what comes before the colon in the example list (a complete sentence). Ask them to name some of the words they might use if the colon weren’t there (introductory words such as *namely*, *for example*, or *that).* They should come up with a rule something likeRule 1 from the Answer Key.

Use the example sentences from the Answer Key without punctuation on the blackboard, smartboard or overhead. Ask the students to supply the colon in the proper place. Give the students the rule and example for Rule 2 on the Answer Key. Collaboratively build another example. Summarize by saying that colons are not just timetellers – they are LISTERS too!

Invite the students to write a postcard from a colon to the class, like the example given in Punctuation takes a Vacation signed, *Listers,* instead of *Timetellers.* This will be the students’ *EXIT SLIP.*

Tell the students that colons have other identities that they will get to discover in small groups. Distribute the handout so that students can copy down the information from the board. After giving them time to fill in the *Listers* section, have the students each go to one of three jigsaw stations to find examples of how to use the colon and to fill out the appropriate section of the hand out. Photocopy and cut apart the RULES and Examples from the Answer Key. After students complete the section of the handout for their station, have them re-group to share their information so that everyone can fill in their blank sections. Give everyone time to make one totally original sentence for each new colon identity. Assign the strongest students to the *Connector* station, competent students to the *Orator* station and struggling students to the *Opener* station.

**List of References:**

GrammarBook.com (January 22, 2012). Colons. Retrieved from <http://www.grammarbook.com/punctuation/colons.asp>

Pulver Robin (2003). Punctuation Takes a Vacation. Holiday House, New York.

The Ministry of Education (2007). The Ontario Curriculum Grades 11 & 12 English. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/english1112currb.pdf>